their proportion yet their aggregate proportion for all ages is the best which is due to the fact that in subsequent age-groups they not only maintain the sex-ratio of their entire group but substantially increase female proportion to 1,114 in group (14-16), 1059 in 17-23. They stand the highest in age-groups 7-13, 17-23, 24-43 and 44 and over while in group 14-16 they are excelled by the Chamars. The broad reason for this satisfactory proportion is that the community being largely agriculturist the females dwell in rural areas, the active agricultural and open air life of which is conducive to better health and comparatively less mortality of females than in other castes like the Kashmiri Pandits and Khatris who are predominantly town-dwellers amidst congested surroundings. The religious objection against infanticide also keeps the proportion of females-children comparatively higher. The Meghs and Chamars who also work on fields either as peasant proprietors or mostly as tenants and field labourers also show similar results. The Rajputs continue to occupy the last place in respect to sex-ratio and it is hoped that with the introduction of measures against female infanticide in this community the proportion will naturally improve at future Censuses. Not only is there a defect in the age-group 0-6 but this is aggravated in 7-13 which indicates the existence of the factor of neglect of female children and partially the existence against disclosure of the particulars about girls approaching marriageable ages.

Shifting our analysis towards the Muslims it is apparent that the Balti tops the list with 1,033 females and is closely followed by Shin (964), Brokpa (958), Jat (930), Sayed (921), Rajput (919), Bafinda (916) while Kashmiri Muslims have only 851. The Balti continues to show a fair excess of females over males at this Census as at the last and we cannot discard the figure as unreal. Although a large share of this excess is attributable to emigration of good portion of Balti males at the time of Census yet we cannot help subscribing to the view that there is a great excess in female birth-rate as is evidenced by the proportion of 1,020 female children between 0-6 to 1,000 males in the same age-period. The healthy and active life of the Brokpas who mostly constitute the pastoral population of the Frontier and the Shins who are a primitive tribe is responsible for better proportion of the females. The proportion of 1,037 given by the Muslim Rajputs at the 1921 Census which then appeared unreliable has been proved to be so by the figures of this Census which gives a record of 919 only. The Jat, Bafinda and Sayed also give fairly satisfactory proportions while the Kashmiri Muslims are in defect for reasons already detailed in the penultimate paragraph.

191. Influence of Social Conditions and Local Customs.—The decade has witnessed remarkable improvement in the social customs of various communities due to the spread of education and civilization. The system of early marriage which was so common in both the provinces and especially amongst the Hindus who literally followed the injunctions of their scriptures in celebrating child marriages has now become a thing of the past—thanks to the Rulers of the State who out of solicitude for his subjects laid statutory prohibition upon this harmful system and drove out of his realms this most injurious social custom. Although the Arya Samaj and some advanced people even among the orthodox Hindus have made strenuous efforts to popularise widow remarriage yet their efforts have not yet produced the desired beneficent results and the instances of widow marriage amongst the State Hindus are few and far between. The *Purdah* system has during the decade lost much of its intensity. The rural and labouring classes observe very little *Purdah* while the people of the middle classes are now giving greater freedom to their women-folk. The progress amidst the higher circles has been greater and it is now become a fashion for the well-to-do to take their wives with them to the Cinemas or for outing of which the Sundays of the Nishat and Shalimar gardens of Srinagar and the flocking of people every evening to pass summer evenings on the Jammu canal are living instances. A good deal of social reform has taken place amongst the Kashmiri Pandits whose women have discarded the loose and untidy dress of centuries and are seen in up-to-date Indian Saries. The return of scholars of various communities after training in the foreign countries has imported far more advanced and liberal ideas the permeation of which in their respective communities is everyday liberalising the atmosphere.

[Errata: see category VII, p. 329 for corrections -- Analyst]

p 162 **181. The Preponderance of the Widows.**—The current Census has enumerated 114,105 widowers and 183,308 widows which establishes the characteristic preponderance of the widows over the widowers. The proportion for the entire State works to 3·4 per cent. widowers and 10·7 per cent. widows as against 3·4 per cent. widowers and 8·2 per cent. widows recorded by the Census of England and Wales in 1921. The contrast will be brought home by the fact that while in the State out of 183,308 widows there are 10,525 widows at ages below 25, the English Census of 1921 on the other hand discloses only 6,000 such widows in the total population of 1,622,000 widows which yields a proportion of 3 per cent. for the State and ·3 per cent. for England leading to the conclusion that widowhood before 25 is practically non-existent among the English women.

While 905 per 1,000 females are married and 75 widowed in the age-period 20-40, it will be a sad surprise to find the statistical ratio undergoing change in the next age-group 40-60 which has only 584 married females and 410 widows per mille and in the next higher group 60 and over the widows proportion increases to 778. In this connection the widowed state amongst the males increased from 83 to 226 in the group 40 to 60 and 330 in 60 and over. This preponderance of the widows over the widowers is a common feature of the Indian Census and arises from the comparative longevity of females but mainly from the greater freedom of marriage amongst the widowers and prohibition of widow re-marriage amongst the Hindus and only partial prevalence of the custom in other communities.

A reference to Subsidiary Table I reveals a sudden jump into widowhood as the females pass from 20-40 group into 40-60. In the 20-40 group there are only 75 widows per 1,000 while in the 40-60 group there is a sudden expansion of the widows proportion to 410 per 1,000 which is about six-times higher than the preceding group. The increase in the case of males proceeds more gradually from 83 in the group 20-40 to 226 in the group 40-60 and 360 in 60 and over.

582 The explanation for the larger proportion of widows is to be found in the custom of child marriage coupled with the evil of pre-puberty intercourse which inflicts serious physical injuries upon the immature parents, and ripe in the bud the life of many a young husband dooming the poor child-wife to perpetual 587 widowhood. The practice of marriage of old men (especially of the moneyed class) who already stand upto the trash-hold of the next world with young virgins in the bloom of life further increases the proportions of the widows since the mysterious hand of death soon falls upon the bridegroom who is soon called upon to exchange the warmth of the nuptial bed for the icy chillness of the tomb. The third and the strongest factor responsible for the superabundance of widows, which is chiefly contributed by the Hindus, is the injunction of the Hindu Shastras which enjoin enforced widowhood and prohibit re-marriage of the widows of the first three castes—The Brahmanas, the Kashatriyas and the Vaishyas. Neither revocation nor widow re-marriage is possible. The wife is enjoined to look upon her husband as an embodiment of God and offer complete submission to his will and dictates during life and in the case of his death the widow is enjoined a religious life of the completest chastity and prayer and is not to think of a fresh [762] union but to practise fasts and austerities. The sacredness of the perpetual union led to the practice of 'Sati' wherewonder the widows burnt themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands to maintain unsullied the sacred bond of marriage even in death. Such being the religious sanctions it was only natural that observance of this institution should be followed with great strictness by the followers of Hinduism and in spite of the law permitting widow re-marriage and the activities of various social organizations especially the Arya Samaj, the Hindu society has not been able to shake off the shackles although one meets with a few instances of widow re-marriage here and there. The Hindus and Jains and even some Muslim castes of the State observe the prejudice against widow marriage although in the interior of the Dogger country among the Thakkar and some other castes of the hills, some laxity prevails and the widows are taken over as wives by the brothers of the deceased husband. The Muslims and Buddhists of the State also do not practise it on a large scale though their religion permits such marriages.

& [Errata: read 'upon'; cf errata sheet, p. 330, category 116 -- Analyst].